



## TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM

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### TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

March 20, 2017

Town Administrator's reports are available on-line at <http://www.ashburnham-ma.gov>

#### COMMITTEE/COMMISSION UPDATES

**Volunteer Openings.** Currently there are openings on the following: (2) Conservation Commission, (2) Parks & Recreation Committee; (1) Board of Assessor's Member. These are listed on the Town's website under Volunteer Opportunities.

#### MEETINGS

**IT Committee.** Our IT committee met last Monday evening with our IT provider, Guardian. We came to a compromise relative to our comprehensive SLA for FY18.

**MMPA.** At the last MMPA meeting, many speakers were present to discuss Recreational Marijuana. This is a topic that the Selectmen may wish to further discuss at a future meeting in order to take a Town-wide approach to the new law(s).

**MMMA.** I attended an MMMA meeting last week, we reviewed local efforts relative to technology in Municipalities. We discussed ensuring that all of our IT contracts, where relevant, cite to the data being Town owned property. In addition, we also discuss regional projects that are ongoing throughout the Commonwealth: shared E-permitting software, shared IT personnel, etc.

**Templeton Procurement Training.** I had the opportunity to attend a free procurement refresher course in Templeton a few weeks ago where we reviewed the latest changes in the laws relevant to procurement.

#### PERSONNEL

**Robert Plant.** In recognition of Robert Plant's service and outstanding dedication and work for Ashburnham's Fire Department, we have promoted him to the position of Deputy Chief. We believe that Bob will be a further asset to the Department and the Town as Deputy Chief. Bob will begin as Deputy Chief on or about March 26, 2017.

**Richard Travers.** After interviewing three candidates, we have hired Richard as our Local Building Inspector. Richard will work under Mr. Reynolds, Building Commissioner, and will assist on a part-time basis, in inspections needed around Town to increase customer service and alleviate some of the workload from Mr. Reynolds and the Cushing projects. The position is temporary until June 30, 2017.

#### PROJECTS

**AWRSD School Budget.** A meeting was held last week in which various budget models were presented. The School Committee certified the Prioritized Budget, which increases their budget by 18%. We are currently working with Westminster to determine which budget they will be budgeting for, so that we can adjust our numbers accordingly. We will be working on an article for Town Meeting for the proposed Prop 2 ½ override that would be needed to pass the 8.1% increase AWRSD is requesting, in the amount up to \$815k. The school will need to work with the Towns to determine when a ballot question (election) will be held.

**Budget FY18.** We will be meeting with the Advisory Board on Wednesday evening to continue reviewing the FY18 budget. We are still waiting on a few numbers in order to be able to complete our figures.

**Community Compact Cabinet Projects.** We have received approval from the State for our three CCC projects:

- a. **Permitting Guide.** Working towards economic development in the town, there is a need to create a soup-to-nuts guide for the most common types of businesses in town on how to and in what order to obtain licenses. I.e: Restaurants, Convenience stores, Car dealer, etc. The details would include which licenses and from what

departments and in what order they would be needed. This is one of the most common complaints we get from potential business owners.

- b. **Risk Assessment.** As noted in our Annual Audits, we would like to conduct a risk assessment of the Town's operations and provide a risk assessment policy for future analysis. In recent history, we had a Librarian charged for stealing money from a special "friends" account out of our local bank over time.
- c. **Access Database Budget.** As a stronger budgeting tool, we would like to convert our excel budget worksheet that consists of over 200 spreadsheets into a larger access database that is easier to enter data, run reports, and which can assist with our transition over the next few years to a more transparent GFOA compliant budget.

We are in the process of complying with procurement requirements and obtaining quotes from relevant vendors and consultants. Upon ascertainment of all information, our summary will be submitted to the State and we will be allowed to begin our projects. The Lieutenant Governor will be scheduling a time to come to Ashburnham to officially sign the Compact.

**DPW Site.** Bill Johnson, AEDC Chair, and I had the pleasure of attending a local Brownfields meeting last week where the Brownfields Committee reviewed our application for a Phase II Environmental study of our current DPW site for work done by our consultants TRC from Lowell, MA in the amount of \$35,500. Preliminary work could be completed as soon as two weeks. Spring 2017—Work Plan Generation/EPA Approval; Late Spring/Early Summer—Field Work/Report Generation; and summer 2017-EPA Report Review/Report Finalization. This is an important progressive step in order to address the concern expressed by many residents of the current state and future opportunities for our present DPW site.

**Sherbert Road.** Our consultants, Tighe & Bond, will begin their boring work in the next few weeks, weather dependent. Our consultants are working in conjunction with the Town to complete the USDA application concurrently with the engineering work, in order to be ready for a submittal in April.

**Health Insurance.** The Health Insurance JPA (Ashburnham, Westminster, and AWRSD) met two weeks ago to further review our options. At this time, our Insurance Consultants will be meeting with the Insurance Advisory Group, which is comprised of representatives from each Town's Unions, the School's Unions, and Town employees. We have chosen to wait at this moment to make a decision having budgeted in the high numbers and looking to gain some traction with a possible favorable change in claims over the next few months. We will be looking at all potential options including: high reimbursable deductibles for certain services, Health Savings Accounts, and different plans.

**Route 101 TIP.** DPW Superintendent, Steven Nims, and I attended last week's MPO meeting. At this time, the MPO is discussing the different possible compilations of area projects to maximize the region's funding. In the models reviewed, Ashburnham's project date varies from 2019 to 2021. The Fiscal Year that is relevant would put the earliest date for our project at October 1, 2018. We are working with our consultants, Weston & Sampson, to make further headway on this project and accomplish a further percentage of completion to allow our project to be more competitive for an earlier TIP date.

**Watatic Dam.** We have entered into agreement with Tighe & Bond to incur additional costs to conduct field research and plan preparation for the boundary surveys required for the potential conveyance of two properties, potential easement, and Title Research for ownership of Lot 12, and ground survey of the estimated 3 acres of land.

**On-Going Projects—*No update at this time***

- Budget FY18
- Green Communities Grant
- DLTA Grant(s)
- Meissner Property
- MOU Gardner
- Parking Main Street-Signage
- Visit of Liquor Establishments in Town
- Website Revamp